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#### Recommended Citation

"MWRO Fall 2005" (2005). *Midwest Regional Office*. 8.  
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## HSUS Helps in Katrina's Wake

**A**s the National Guard entered New Orleans to quell civil disorder coming in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, members of the HSUS National Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) worked their way into the nearly obliterated regions of southern Mississippi and Louisiana. The situation could not have been more urgent in both areas, with reports of animals locked in homes, kennels, veterinary clinics, and other locations. It was a race against time for our first responders on the ground.

The presence of HSUS personnel was good news for nearly 130 dogs and cats in Gulfport, Mississippi. There, HSUS team members rescued these animals from the animal shelter of the Humane Society of South Mississippi, which was flooded by the combination of a storm surge with an overflow discharge of human waste from the sewage treatment plant next door. Some animals swam in their cages for hours, somehow managing to keep their heads above water. Others were not so

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**An airboat moves down a flooded New Orleans street September 5 with animal rescue workers, a rifle-toting guard, and several rescued dogs. With thousands of stranded pets in the city, HSUS rescuers were frantically trying to reach as many animals as they could.**



KATHY MILANI/HSUS

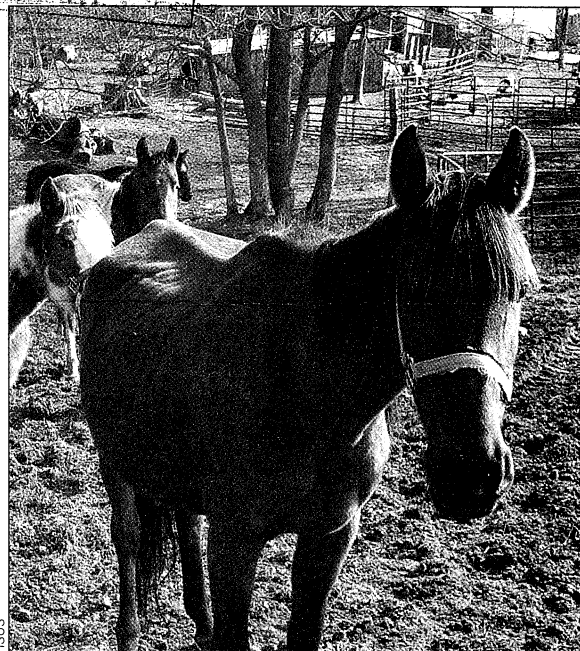
## Big Cruelty Bust

**W**hat began as one couple's desire to help animals ended this past spring with more than 100 animals fighting for their lives. When MWRO received a call for help from the Linn County Sheriff's Office, we responded along with volunteers from two other humane agencies and an equine rescue group to a farm in rural Palo, Iowa. Local authorities had been monitoring the situation at the property for quite some time and attempting to correct the problems of neglect that they had found, but the situation had escalated to a point where immediate action was necessary. Dozens of animals' lives were in danger.

Once the Sheriff's Department served the search warrant, MWRO Program Coordinator Scott Wilson began assessing the animals' situation. He observed that all of the watering troughs in the fields were empty. The food appeared to be poor-quality hay with no other grazing available on the barren pastures. There were also no mineral blocks, which are necessary for horses' health. This lack of basic food and water was evident in the condition of nearly every horse in the pastures. Many of the horses appeared underweight, and one horse's ribs, hips, and spine were clearly noticeable.

Further investigation of the fields produced one of the most disturbing finds of all. The bodies of two dead horses lay in a pile, burned almost beyond recognition. The bodies of three more dead horses lay nearby in the brush awaiting the same fate, and nearby, a large area of freshly turned soil marked the spot where it is suspected that even more horses may have been buried.

Evidence of the failure to provide even basic care, compounded by the discovery of



**This horse was one of more than 100 neglected animals MWRO helped rescue in Palo, Iowa.**

so many dead horses, necessitated the removal of all of the horses on the property. With the help of volunteers, MWRO began the arduous task of individually assessing, identifying, and photographing each horse, as deputies loaded them onto waiting trailers for removal to a safe location by the Equine Rescue Network.

The team discovered that dozens of cats and dogs on the property were also suffering from a lack of food, water, shelter, and care. Many of the animals appeared underweight and seemed to be infested with parasites. As with the horses, the animals' conditions were bad enough to warrant their removal.

The last animal found was a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig in a pen with three other large pigs. It was evident that this pig had been unable to get to food and was severely emaciated with bones clearly visible. The pigs too were removed, along with some goats and peacocks. In all, 67 horses, more than 50 cats and dogs, four pigs, and several

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lucky. Those rescued went to Jackson, Mississippi, where the HSUS logistical team worked to place them with humane societies around the country.

The rescue in Gulfport occurred as dozens of HSUS relief workers extended their reach into devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi, working to establish pet-friendly shelters, coordinating animal relief activities with local partners in both government and the non-profit sector, and improvising solutions to a host of animal-related emergencies.

Phones began ringing at The HSUS almost as soon as Katrina struck. The HSUS moved quickly to set up a dedicated Disaster Call Center at its headquarters in the nation’s capital, and dozens of staff members suspended their normal duties to handle thousands of telephone calls and e-mails from around the country—many from people seeking urgent assistance as they tried to locate, recover, or keep their animal companions in the midst of the disaster.

On their first foray into the embattled city of New Orleans on September 4, members of the HSUS DART, together with animal control staff from the Louisiana SPCA, targeted animals stranded at the Superdome as their priority. There, they rescued dozens of animals relinquished or abandoned by desperate evacuees who fled the city to escape Katrina’s rage.

The HSUS is helping place evacuated animals into adoption programs in Texas and other states. Working with local humane groups, rescuers saved more than 6,000 animals on the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast.

“The total number of animals lost to the storm will be difficult to detect for months,” said Laura Bevan, director of HSUS’s Southeast Regional Office and head of the Mississippi rescue effort. Tens of thousands of people and animals are still waiting for rescue and assistance. “This is going to require a massive, long-term effort,” she said. But The HSUS is committed to the task.

To support The HSUS’s animal protection efforts, go to the Web page [www.hsus.org/join](http://www.hsus.org/join).

# Taking Issue with Exotics

**W**e’ve all heard the line, “Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!” But what about the monkeys, cougars, and servals? Ownership of exotic animals is a growing problem in many parts of the country, including the Midwest, but what sort of problem is it?

This past summer, Minnesota seemed riddled with instances of exotic animal mishaps. The escape of a lion from an unlicensed wildlife farm prompted the removal of nine tigers on June 14, and, just a week later, a 10-year-old boy in the Minneapolis area was attacked and critically injured by a tiger and a lion being kept by a businessman with nine other large cats and a bear in a warehouse. The owner described the animals as “a novelty” to the media. On July 18, 2000, a seven-year-old Jefferson City, Missouri, boy was attacked by a neighbor’s pet rhesus macaque, who jumped from a tree and bit the boy’s arm as he rode his bicycle. The child was subjected to a two-month ordeal involving doctors, needles, tests, and the fear of contracting a deadly strain of herpes virus. On August 4, 2004, in Davenport, Iowa, a woman at the Mississippi Valley Fair was bitten, scratched, and hit on the head by a monkey who was posing for photographs.

The list goes on and on—roadside exhibits, personal pets, substandard rescues. Every year it seems as if dozens, if not hundreds, of people are injured in encounters with wild animals.

So what are states doing to protect their citizens?

- During the 2005 Iowa legislative session,



**Exotic animals nearly always suffer when they are kept as pets. And as incidents in the Midwest show, the animals aren’t the only ones to suffer.**

legislation was proposed to prohibit the ownership of any wild animal without a permit from the Department of Agriculture. Unfortunately, this bill died in committee. Currently, the only state regulation regarding wild cats involves bobcats, and there are no state regulations involving primates.

- In Missouri, similar legislation was introduced that would have restricted the ownership of wild animals. That bill also died in committee. The only current regulation in Missouri applies only to bobcats and mountain lions. Missouri also is home to one the nation’s largest exotic pet auctions in Branson.
- In Kansas the only regulation involves the confinement of wild cats. There are no

controls over who may possess these animals or how many, and there are no state regulations involving primates.

- Private, non-commercial ownership of wild cats, including cross breeds with domestic cats, is illegal in Nebraska. Permits are issued to municipal, state, or federal zoos; parks, refuges, or wildlife areas; or bona fide circus or animal exhibits. Again, there are no state regulations involving primates.
- Last year, Minnesota passed legislation that

requires owners of dangerous wild animals to register with local animal control authorities. Applicants must possess adequate knowledge of the species; provide adequate, clean enclosures and veterinary care once a year; and facilities may be inspected by the Department of Natural Resources. The law does not regulate primates.

Wild animals by their very definition are “wild” and should not be kept as pets or novelties. The HSUS strongly opposes the keeping of exotic and wild animals as pets, and we continue to strive to end their ownership by poorly regulated roadside zoos and exhibits. For more information, visit [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

# “Off the Chain” Reveals Betrayal of Man’s Best Friend

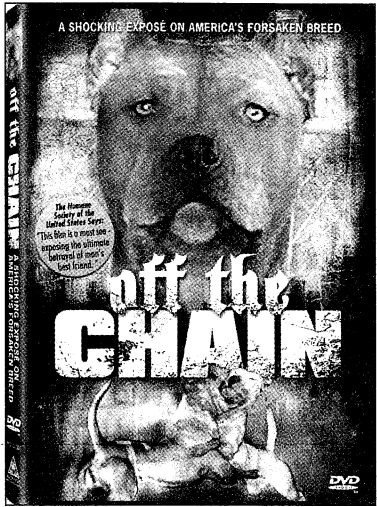
**P**resident Theodore Roosevelt owned one. So did Helen Keller. This breed of dog was the trademark of Buster Brown shoes and RCA Victor. Petey was the canine star of television’s “Our Gang.” And Stubby was the most decorated dog in American history, having received numerous medals and the honorary rank of Sergeant for his services during World War I. What do these famous dogs have in common? They were all American pit bull terriers.

How did such a beloved breed come to be feared as a “public enemy” that is now banned in more than 200 counties and the entire province of Ontario, Canada? That’s what director Bobby J. Brown seeks to show in his new film “Off the Chain,” available on DVD from Ardustry Home Entertainment.

Beginning with a history of the American pit bull terrier, the film explores the evolution of the breed and gives viewers a disturbing look into the minds of the dog owners and trainers who participate in the gruesome world of dogfighting. As HSUS West Coast Regional Director Eric Sakach says, “This film goes inside the belly of the beast, and the beast isn’t the pit bull terrier, it’s man. This is the ultimate betrayal of man’s best friend. The director exposes the fastest growing crime in America—dogfighting. ‘Off the Chain’ is a horrifying glimpse into the world where the special relationship between man and dog has been perverted.”

Brown spent three years infiltrating the underground subculture of pit bull fighting. Gaining the trust of well-established “dog men” who allowed him to film behind their veil of secrecy, Brown shot footage of dog training, police raids, and the fights themselves. But he also captured another side: the loving nature of the dogs and their brutal misuse by those who are supposed to be their caretakers.

Brown is generously donating to The HSUS one-third of the proceeds from sales of “Off the Chain” DVDs sold through The HSUS. To order, go to [www.offthechainproductions.com/store](http://www.offthechainproductions.com/store) and use the redemption code: HSUSOTC. As The HSUS’s Eric Sakach puts it, “ ‘Off the Chain’ will grab you and shake you, and, hopefully, it will stir you into action.”



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goats and peacocks were seized. The owners have been charged in Linn County Court with multiple charges of neglect and cruelty to animals. No trial date has been set.

The defendants in this case fit the profile of animal hoarders, defined as people who amass more animals than they can properly care for. Hoarders generally fail to recognize—or refuse to acknowledge—when their animals become victims of gross neglect.

One way that you can help prevent hoarder tragedies from happening is to promote legislation that provides for licensing, inspection, and strict regulation of both private and public shelters. Another is to support the humane organization in your community responsible for enforcing statutes against cruelty to animals, and to notify local police or animal control if you suspect someone is hoarding animals.

For more information about hoarding, visit our Web site at [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org), and search for “hoarding.”

## I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me information about

- \_\_\_ Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
- \_\_\_ Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency.
- \_\_\_ Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

- \_\_\_ Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.
- \_\_\_ Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.



Promoting the protection of all animals

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES**  
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE  
1515 Linden St., Suite 220  
Des Moines, IA 50309

# Director's Report



**By Diane Webber**

**Director of the Midwest Regional Office**

## With a Little Help from Our Friends

**T**he HSUS is a voice for animals across the country. In the Midwest, our office helps to monitor and push for a variety of animal-protection legislation—from felony penalties for cruelty and animal fighting to exotic animal bans and non-lethal wildlife management. We testify before legislators, help draft legislation, and provide expert advice to elected officials.

This past year, we lobbied for exotic animal bans in both Iowa and Missouri, protections for service dogs in Missouri, felony cruelty penalties and greyhound protection in Kansas, dog and cat facility licensing and protection for household pets in domestic violence cases in Nebraska, and several wildlife protection bills in Minnesota. And we opposed the reintroduction of dove hunting in Iowa and Minnesota, bills making it easier for factory farming operations to set up in Missouri, and Internet hunts and coyote bounties in Minnesota.

Political activism is one of the most important ways to bring about long-term change for animals. Elected officials make major decisions affecting the lives of animals on a regular basis. Whether you consider

yourself an animal advocate or an activist, you can help make a difference by becoming involved in legislative efforts. One way to do this is to become a member of The HSUS Humane Action Network (HAN). The network consists of individuals who contact legislators in their area, urging support of or opposition to specific legislation. When important legislation comes up, a rapid and large grassroots response (such as phone calls and letters to legislators) is a proven, highly effective means of protecting animals.

Through unification, animal advocates have enormous impact in evoking positive change for animals. HAN members were extremely effective this past year, not only on the state legislation mentioned above, but also on several federal bills such as the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act and the Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act.

"With a little help from our friends" we can amplify our voice for animals and make a real difference. We need you to help make the Network a success. Contact our office to learn how you can strengthen your voice, unite with others, and join the Humane Action Network. Or you can sign up online at [www.hsus.org/join](http://www.hsus.org/join) and check the box to receive "HumaneLines" via e-mail.

### **Members of the Humane Action Network helped block the reintroduction of dove hunting in Iowa and Minnesota.**



## Contacting HSUS

### **Write:**

HSUS Midwest Regional Office  
1515 Linden St., Ste. 220  
Des Moines, IA 50309

**Call:** 515-283-1393

**Fax:** 515-283-1407

**Web Page:** [www.hsus.org/mwro](http://www.hsus.org/mwro)

## Promoting the protection of all animals

## Send a Message to Trader Joe's

**U**nlike its competitors in the natural foods market, such as Whole Foods and Wild Oats, Trader Joe's still sells eggs from hens confined in "battery" cages so small they can't even spread their wings. These animals are so intensively confined that they never engage in many important behaviors, including nesting, perching, and dust bathing. Their lives are filled with immense suffering. In the past, Trader Joe's has been responsive to customer concern for animal welfare, but the chain is refusing to stop selling eggs from caged hens.

The HSUS needs you to ask Trader Joe's to can the cages and sell only cage-free eggs.

Call Trader Joe's at 626-599-3817 (West Coast) and 781-455-7319 (East Coast) and ask the company to adopt a policy to sell only cage-free eggs.

During your next trip to Trader Joe's, talk with the store manager and request that the chain adopt a policy against selling battery cage eggs.

Please send us your Trader Joe's receipts. We'll send them to the company to show that their consumers care about the welfare of laying hens. Send receipts to: The Humane Society of the U.S., Factory Farming Campaign, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

The *MWRO Regional News* is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Midwest Regional Office, 1515 Linden St., Ste. 220, Des Moines, IA 50309; 515-283-1393. Diane Webber, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays.

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